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Winnipeg metro

Your essential daily news | WEEKEND, MAY 12-14, 2017

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CLIMATE CHANGE

GET USED TO IT

Feds on flooding

metroNEWS

Zephyra Vun, executive director of Design Quarter Winnipeg

LYLE STAFFORD/FOR METRO

THIS WAY TO *design*

Group maps out unique spaces in Exchange District, downtown metroNEWS

UNANIMOUS SUPPORT

MLAs set day for MMIWG awareness

Jessica Botelho-Urbanski
Metro | Winnipeg

A bill brought forth by a Manitoba MLA to honour our missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls has earned unanimous support.

NDP MLA Nahanni Fontaine put forward Bill 221, The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Awareness Day Act, which got a second reading at the legislature Thursday.

Fontaine proposed setting aside Oct. 4 as an official day to honour MMIWG and spotlight families' plights.

"Oct. 4 is a traditional day for vigils across the country for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. It is an appropriate day to honour Manitoba's lost daughters, mothers, sisters, grandmothers, partners and friends," Fontaine said in a news release.

"This bill still needs to go to committee as soon as possible so it can become law before Oct. 4 of this year. We call upon the government to work with us to make this important day a reality."

According to a 2014 RCMP report, nearly 1,200 Indigenous women and girls were reported missing or murdered since 1980. The federal government has launched a national inquiry into the issue, which has been plagued by delays and inaction.

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news
Weekend, May 12-14, 2017

Art gallery sees Picasso exhibits drawing crowds

DISPLAY

Pieces on loan from private collectors, institutions

Jessica Botelho-Urbanski
Metro | Winnipeg

Like him or not, curiosity may override personal taste when it comes to seeing two new Pablo Picasso exhibits at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

The WAG is expecting its latest features, Picasso in Canada and Picasso: Man & Beast, to attract major attendance numbers in the realm of the record-breaking 100 Masters exhibit from 2013, which drew 60,000.

Chief curator Andrew Kear said the WAG hasn't had a Picasso-themed exhibit since 1978. And although the Spanish artist can be polarizing due to his womanizing ways and inflated ego, his significance can't be understated.

"His work with (French painter) Georges Braque on cubism was basically the game-changing artistic movement of the 20th century by far," Kear said.

Picasso in Canada features dozens of pieces on loan from other Canadian institutions and private collectors, including two pieces of pottery and one Salome-inspired print from Winnipeg contributed anonymously.

Kear called Picasso an "omnivorous artist," who learnt myriad mediums like sculpture, collage, printmaking and painting, before "breaking the rules" of the craft and going about them his own way.

The Vollard Suite, on display in Man & Beast, is a rare collection of 100 etchings Picasso donated to his former art dealer, Ambroise Vollard.

Featuring sketches of past lovers and many manipulations of minotaurs, the suite is on loan from the National Gallery of Canada, which seldom displays the artwork altogether because of its fragility and scale.

"I think the suite brings up a whole range of issues that people can sort of consider, Picasso's relationship to women, being one; the whole relationship of violence and civilization (and) the role of the genius artist. How do we parse that now?" Kear said.

"Picasso posited himself as — and continues to be thought of as — this sort of natural genius. So people can, I think, look at the work and decide for themselves what genius means and how that's at play in the work or not."

Both exhibits open at the WAG on Saturday and are on display until April 13.

1 **Two new exhibitions focused on the works of Pablo Picasso open at the Winnipeg Art Gallery this weekend.** CONTRIBUTED/ERNEST MAYER

2 **Dove with Olive Branch, 1962. Lithograph on paper. From the collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.** STEPHEN TOPFER/PICASSO ESTATE

3 **Femme assise, 1927. Oil on canvas. Art Gallery of Ontario, purchased, with assistance from the Women's Committee and anonymous contributions.** PICASSO ESTATE / SODRAC

Four things to do this weekend

Michelle Bailey
For Metro | Winnipeg

'Hart' and soul: Prima ballerina Evelyn Hart returns to perform with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in the world premiere of James Kudelka's Vespers. Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Sunday at 2 p.m. Centennial Concert Hall. For ticket info visit centennialconcerthall.com

Carnival with a twist: Play on a keyboard made out of fruit or see what it's like to lay down on a bed of nails. Science Rendezvous Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus in the EITC Engineering and Science Complex buildings. www.sci.umanitoba.ca

And they're off: Assiniboia Downs begins its 60th season Sun, May 14 at 1:30 p.m. www.asdowns.com

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Defence: Retrial evidence flawed

COURT

Accused's lawyer questions DNA samples in case of murdered teen

The lawyer for a man accused of killing a teenaged girl in Winnipeg three decades ago told a court Thursday the Crown's evidence is deeply, fatally flawed.

In his closing arguments, Saul Simmonds said DNA samples the Crown has used against Mark Edward Grant are so tiny as to be infinitesimal, and could be from one of the many people who had visited the industrial shed where Candace Derksen's frozen body was found with her hands and feet bound with twine in January 1985.

"There were numerous people who entered that shed," Simmonds said, referring to workers at the industrial site, police officers and others.

A photo of Candace Derksen aged 13. WILMA DERKSEN

"We know that certain people touched the twine, there were dozens of people in this (investigative) process."

Derksen was 13 when she disappeared on her way home from school on Nov. 30, 1984. Her body was found six weeks later. Grant, a man with a long criminal record, was arrested in 2007 following DNA testing on the twine used to bind Derksen and was convicted in 2011 of second-degree murder.

The conviction was overturned two years later when an appeal court ruled the trial judge erred in not allowing Grant's defence to present evidence that pointed to another possible killer — an unidentified person who tied up a 12-year-old girl in another part of Winnipeg in 1985, while Grant was in custody on another matter.

Between Derksen's death and Grant's initial trial, the DNA samples had deteriorated, court was told earlier this year.

Dr. Amarjit Chahal, the lab director at Molecular World which ran the DNA tests, testified in January that the twine contained DNA from at least two males, and Grant could not be excluded as a contributor. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pride 30 FOR 30

Transgender activist finds her voice

GENDER IDENTITY

Shandi Strong transformed from 'sissy' to outspoken

Jessica Botelho-Urbanski
Metro | Winnipeg

Shandi Strong is one of the most outspoken advocates for transgender rights in Winnipeg, though it took awhile to find her voice.

Strong, 55, said she's known she was transgender since she was a child and cross-dressed as a teenager. When her mom found out, her parents sent her to a psychiatrist.

"For my parents, I was a sissy. It was okay for my sister to be a tomboy, but it was not okay for me to be a sissy. So that behaviour was attempted to be corrected," she said.

A lack of education about transgender identity in the 1970s prevented adults from acknowledging that's what she was, Strong said. She wound up mending fences with her parents decades later.

When Strong finally expressed her true gender identity in the workplace, she lost her retail job.

"When I came out as trans socially six years ago, I was fired on the spot because I didn't have rights on paper at that time, whereas gay men and lesbians have had that protection for about a decade or so," she said.

She's since reimagined her career and is now pursuing politics, working for Liberal MLA Jon Gerrard as a constituency assistant and planning to run for a legislature seat for a second time in 2020.

When she's not helping River Heights residents, Strong volunteers as an advocacy coordinator for Pride Winnipeg, where she was the parade's first transgender grand marshal in 2015.

Shandi Strong. METRO

METRO ASKS

Why was Pride important 30 years ago?

Thirty years ago when it started it was a very difficult time to be anything other than a white, God-fearing person. People didn't understand gay culture, there were so many stereotypes and so much lack of knowledge ... Through Pride, people have been able to see that we are in fact here and growing. And through acceptance in the media and everything else that's going on in the world, people have come to learn that somebody else's sexuality really doesn't affect them and their life.

What's your favourite Pride moment?

One of my favourite memories of Pride was the first time I was on a float. The Miss Club 200 at the time said, 'Come on, get up on my float!' So I hopped up there with her and it was raining — pouring rain. I looked like a drowned rat. But halfway through the parade, I turned around and I looked at the crowd behind us and it was amazing. There were thousands upon thousands of people following us. And it really kind of hit home that, you know what? I'm not alone.

JESSICA BOTELHO-URBANSKI/METRO

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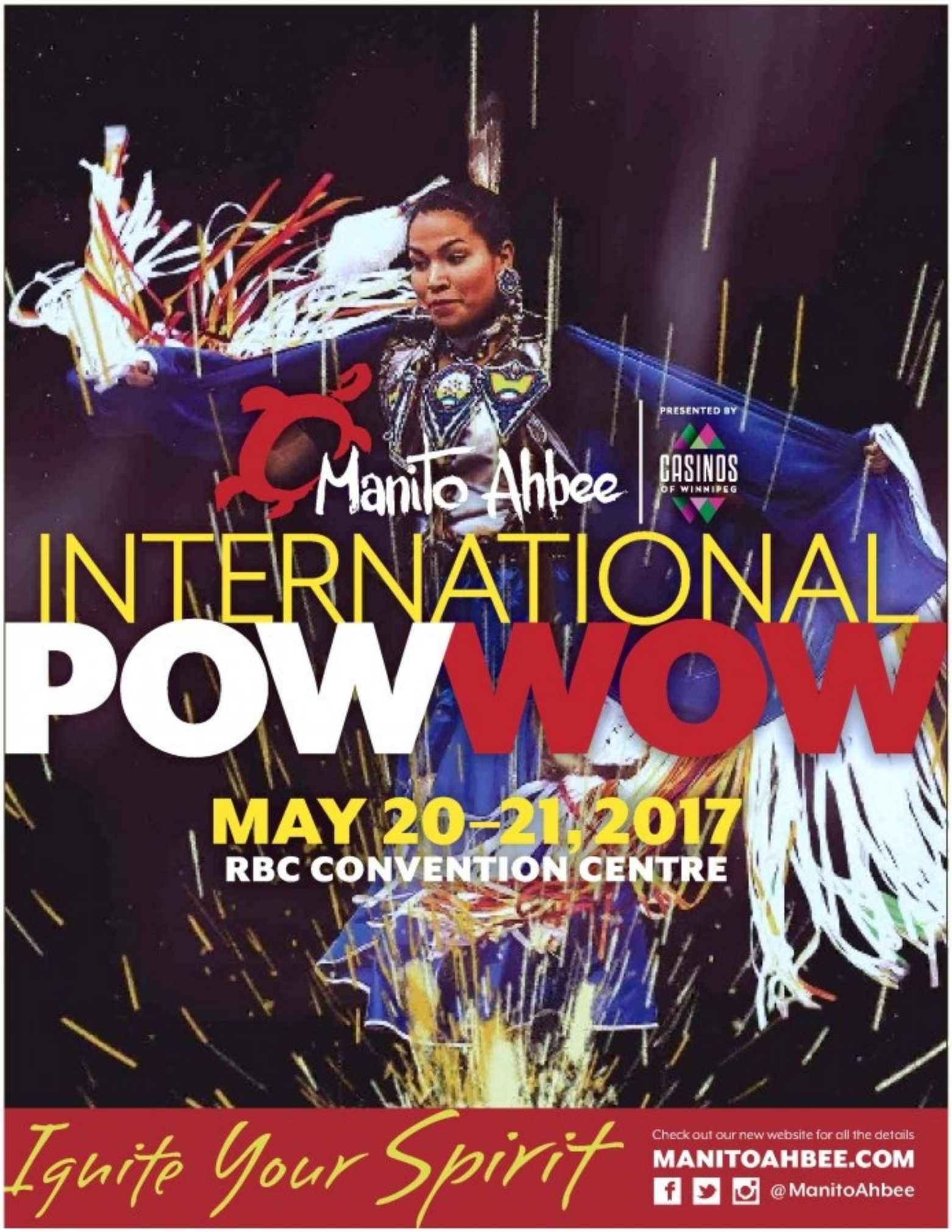

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Highlighting the city's great design

ARTS

Non-profit wants to curate creative spaces

Michelle Bailey
For Metro | Winnipeg

Zephyra Vun of Design Quarter Winnipeg. LYLE STAFFORD/FOR METRO

Five years ago, the word "design" might not have been easily associated with the Exchange District or downtown.

But a new non-profit organization is seeking out all the nooks in those neighbourhoods where "great design" is to be found.

Design Quarter Winnipeg is made up of those in the city's centre who represent everything from the arts community to shops and restaurants in Winnipeg's core.

The concept, being launched Friday, involves a curated walkable area that connects the Exchange District, downtown and The Forks. Maps will be handed out that indicate just how closely situated unique shops, studios and eateries are to each other.

"Some people don't realize, for example, that it only takes 12 minutes to walk from the east side of the Exchange to The Forks," said Design Quarter Winnipeg executive director Zephyra Vun. "It's not far at all and there's so much to see and do in between."

"Great design, whether in spaces, fashion or consumer goods, and the creative energy of Winnipeg, is something to celebrate," said DQW board chair Johanna Hurme, whose hails from Helsinki, Finland where they have a similar design district.

"We want to highlight and curate these areas in Winnipeg to locals and visitors because appreciation for design contributing to experience is a growing trend, locally and globally."

Winnipeg fashion designer and founder/owner of Friday Knights, Eric Olek, is one of those who has happily gravitated to this part of the city to operate his clothing business.

For more information about Design Quarter, go to designquarterwinnipeg.ca.

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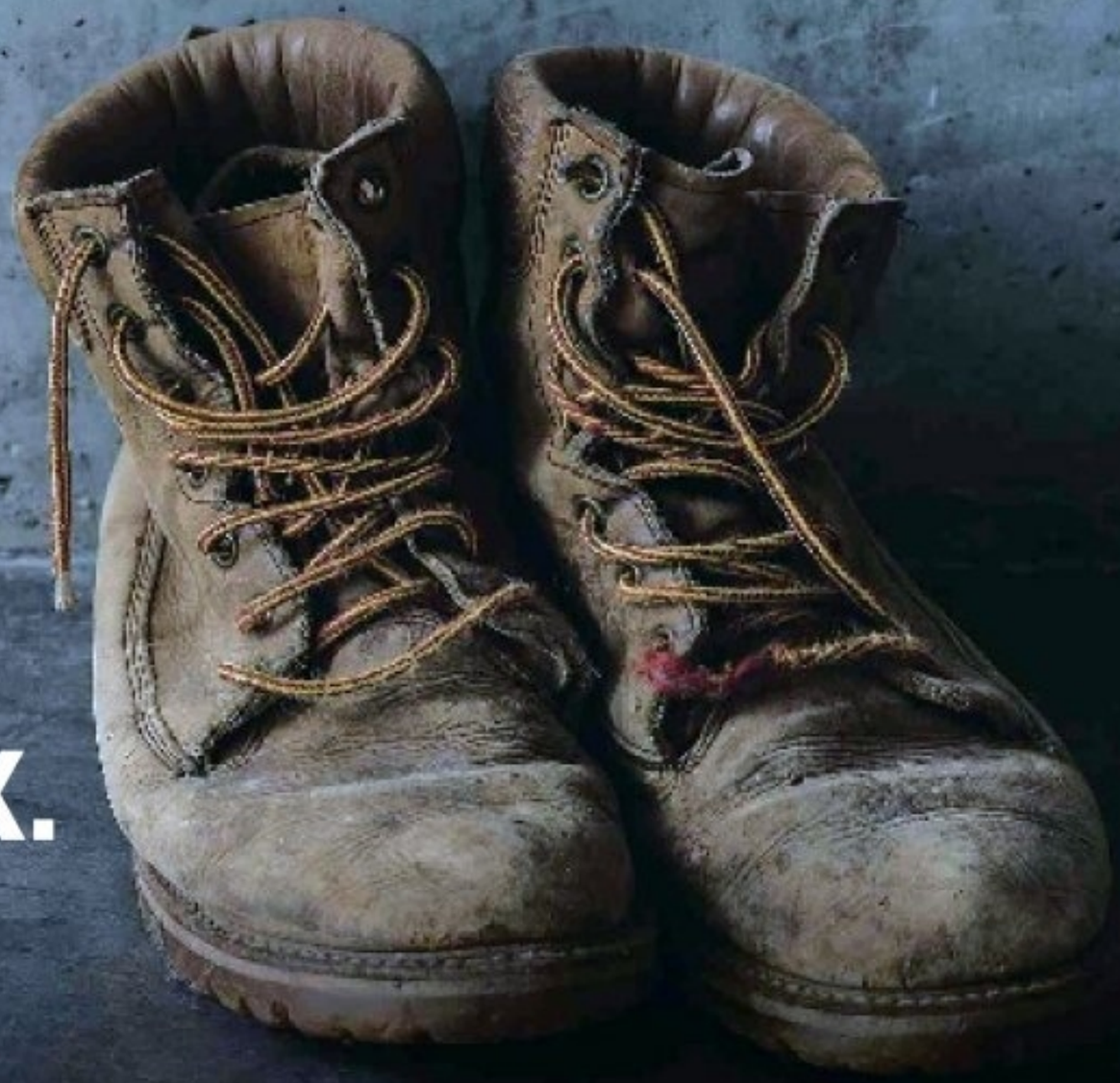

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Brace for disasters more often, PM says

PM Justin Trudeau speaks to media after a tour of a flooded area of Gatineau, Que. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is sounding the alarm on the frequency and intensity of natural disasters in Canada, which have pushed Ottawa's bills for federal help to $360 million a year since 2011.

The numbers clearly suggest a dramatic escalation in the frequency and severity of natural calamities, a theme Trudeau echoed Thursday after embarking on a helicopter tour of flood-ravaged western Quebec.

"We're going to have to understand that bracing for a hundred-year storm is maybe going to happen every 10 years now or every few years," the prime minister said after his helicopter tour with Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard. "That means as we look to rebuild our communities, our homes, our infrastructures, we're going to have to think about what we can do to rebuild better, to rebuild in ways that are going to be more resistant, more resilient to the unpredictability we are now living."

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale also said Canadians will have to get used to climate change-fuelled disasters, and quickly.

"The objective should be, rather than expecting to spend so much after the fact cleaning up, we should look for all of those opportunities to invest in mitigation and adaptation before the fact so that the losses will be minimized," Goodale said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

U.S. President Donald Trump SCREENGRAB

Former FBI director James Comey THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trump: I lied on Comey

POLITICS

U.S. president abandons his rationale for the decision

Over and over, for two days, U.S. President Donald Trump, Vice-President Mike Pence and the rest of their administration said Trump fired FBI director James Comey only at the recommendation of a senior official in the Department of Justice.

Trump conceded Thursday that they were all lying.

Abandoning his entire public rationale for the stunning decision on Tuesday, Trump told NBC anchor Lester Holt that he was planning to fire Comey even before he met with Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein.

"He's a showboat, he's a grandstander. The FBI has been in turmoil. You know that, I know that, everybody knows that," Trump told Holt in an interview.

His comments deepen the credibility crisis facing an administration that has made lying a habit. And they further call into question the democratic legitimacy of his decision to terminate the man in charge of an investigation into whether his campaign associates colluded with Russian meddling in the presidential election.

The administration had implausibly insisted that Trump had grown dismayed about Comey's unfair treatment of Hillary Clinton last year — that he was merely agreeing with the independent concerns Rosenstein expressed to him in a meeting on Monday and in a written memo.

In Trump's own letter to Comey, he said he was "accepting" a recommendation from Rosenstein and Sessions.

But Trump gave an entirely different explanation to Holt.

"I was going to fire Comey. My decision," he said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NEW FBI BOSS

Speaking publicly for the first time as the FBI's new acting director, Andrew McCabe assured senators Thursday he will alert them to any effort to interfere with the investigation into Russia's election meddling.

ELECTION 2019

Canadian spies look for election 'vulnerabilities'

The Communications Security Establishment has begun a promised review into the risks of foreign interference in the 2019 election, Torstar has learned.

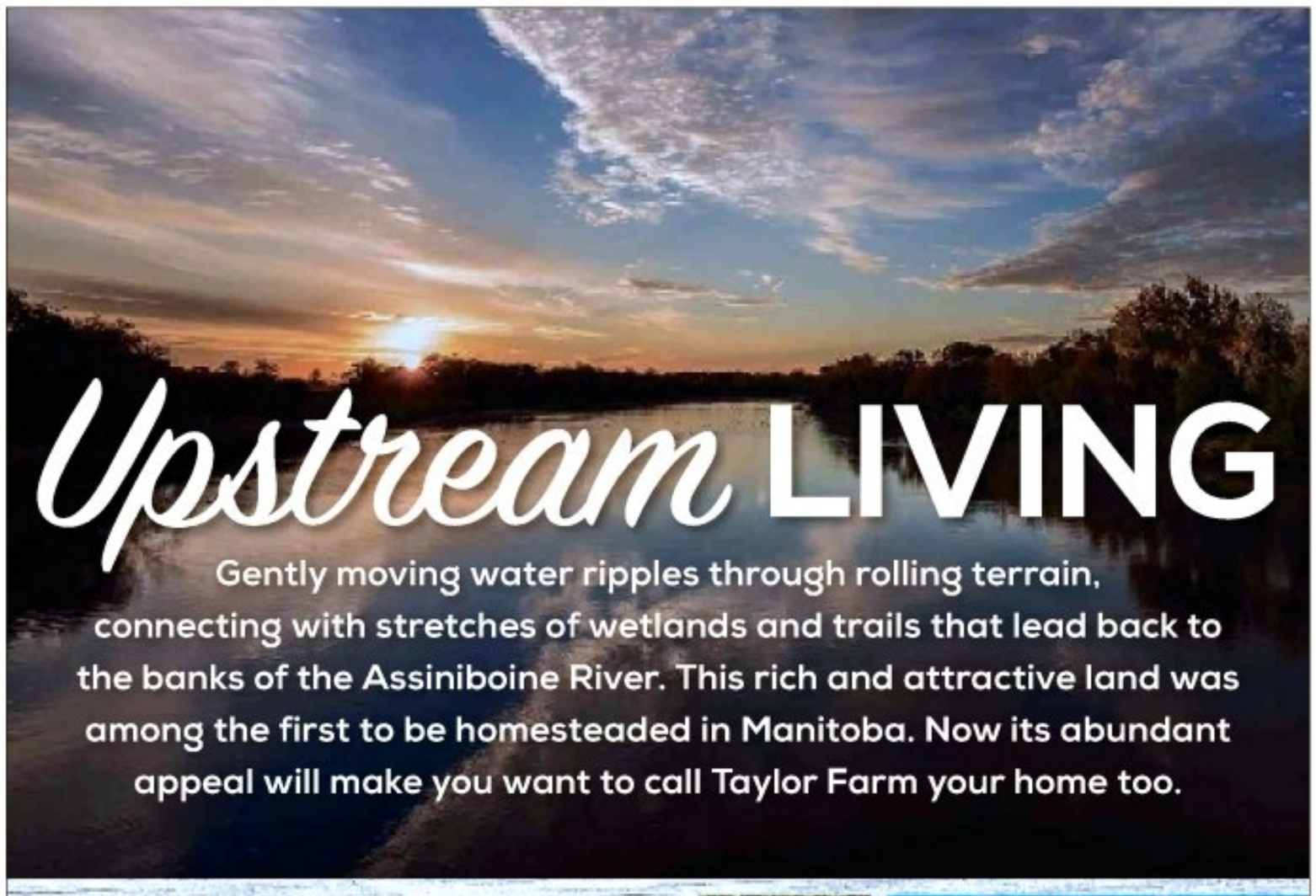
CSE, Canada's signals intelligence and cyberdefence agency, is conducting a "risk assessment" into how vulnerable Canadian elections are to foreign hacking and information operations.

The Liberal ordered the review as the scope of Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election was being made public by American intelligence agencies.

"CSE has been asked to provide a threat assessment of the cyber threat environment as it relates to the Canadian democratic process, including the electoral system," said Ryan Foreman, a spokesman for CSE.

In the U.S. and French presidential elections, Russian-backed hackers have been accused of releasing damaging information about candidates in support of rivals friendlier to the Kremlin.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE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metro SCIENCE

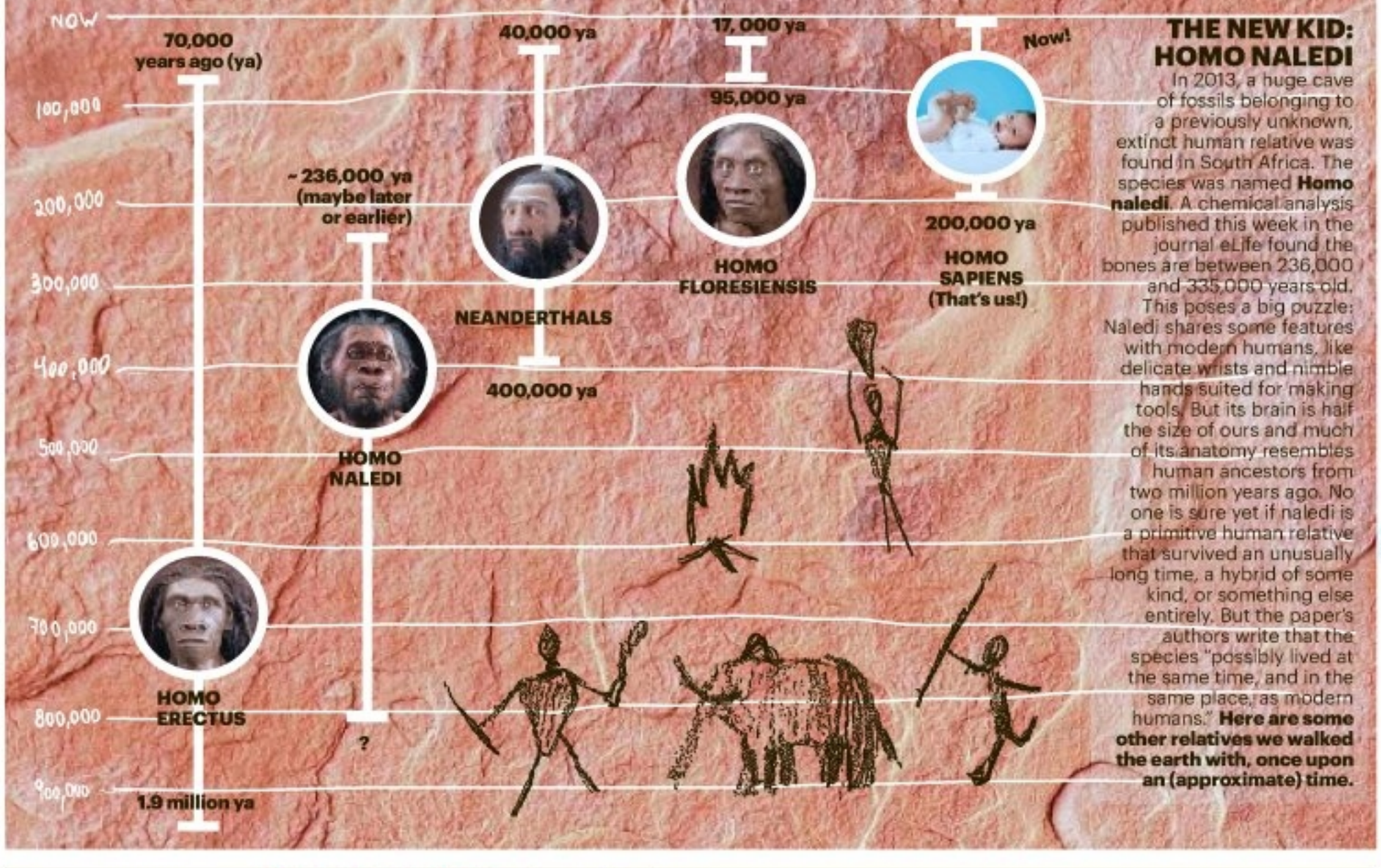
Your essential science news

Fountain of youth If you're trying to look younger, forget smiling and wear a shocked expression instead, says a new study

DECODED by Genna Buck and Andrés Plana

THE FANTASTIC HUMAN FAMILY

The "March of Progress" image, where the knuckle-dragging ape transitions to upright modern man, doesn't tell the whole story. For much of our species' history, ***Homo sapiens*** co-existed with other close relatives in the genus Homo. Like us, they were tool-makers, fire-controllers, maybe even storytellers. But they weren't ***us***, exactly. And now our family tree has a new branch.



THE NEW KID: HOMO NALEDI

In 2013, a huge cave of fossils belonging to a previously unknown, extinct human relative was found in South Africa. The species was named **Homo naledi**. A chemical analysis published this week in the journal eLife found the bones are between 236,000 and 335,000 years old. This poses a big puzzle: Naledi shares some features with modern humans, like delicate wrists and nimble hands suited for making tools. But its brain is half the size of ours and much of its anatomy resembles human ancestors from two million years ago. No one is sure yet if naledi is a primitive human relative that survived an unusually long time, a hybrid of some kind, or something else entirely. But the paper's authors write that the species "possibly lived at the same time, and in the same place, as modern humans." **Here are some other relatives we walked the earth with, once upon an (approximate) time.**

CITIZEN SCIENTIST by Genna Buck

The case of that one crazy study

Is it true humans were in the Americas more than 100,000 years ago? - Sarah, Toronto

It's true a study to that effect was recently published in Nature. It describes 130,000-year-old mastodon bones in San Diego, Calif., that appear to have been snapped by human hands, perhaps to make tools or extract the tasty bone marrow. The very heavy rocks found alongside them could be ancient anvils.

These findings are pretty wack. A large body of evidence shows the first humans in the Americas crossed the ice bewteen present-day Russia to Alaska between 15,000 and 13,000 years ago, not before.

Homo sapiens were still in Africa 130,000 years ago. But human relatives with whom we share ancient common ancestors had made it to Europe and Asia. So it's not insane to suppose they could have crossed into North America.

But claims that go against scientific consensus require extraordinary evidence. And there's a history in this discipline of the type of dissenting scientists I call, for lack of a better term, crusaders.

They often hold appointments at prestigious universities and publish in peer-reviewed journals; though usually the same obscure ones over and over.

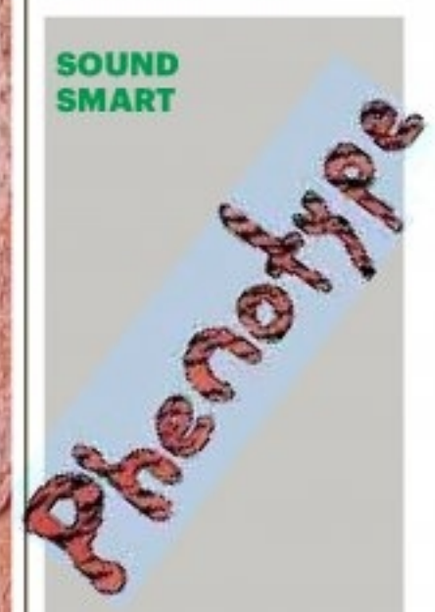
William Davis, a.k.a. the Wheat Belly guy, believes bread is the source of all our ills. His dairy counterpart, Neal Barnhard, is on a crusade against a "dangerous" and "addictive" public-health menace: cheese. Frederick vom Saal and a few of his close colleagues at the University of Missouri are convinced consuming trace amounts of BPA poses an imminent danger to health, a position regulatory agencies and toxicologists have refuted. Sometimes crusaders are proven right. But that only happens after the discovery of more, better, and independent evidence.

Science Question?
genna.buck@metronews.ca

FINDINGS
Your week in science

HAIR-RACING SCHEME
Researchers in France are taking motorsport down a notch. Last month, six teams of nanotechnologists built race cars the size of a single molecule and went head-to-head on top of a head. Well, on a track smaller than the width of a human hair.

SOUND SMART



DEFINITION
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MOVIES MUSIC TELEVISION DIGITAL

Taming the dog and pony show

IN FOCUS

On media duty, King Arthur's main men are sharp as swords

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Charlie Hunnam (right) is the yang to his King Arthur director Guy Ritchie's yin — when it comes to promotional work. CONTRIBUTED

Guy Ritchie's films have entertained me for years but I'm afraid he didn't find me very interesting.

The incident happened during my press day with Ritchie and Charlie Hunnam, the director and star of King Arthur: Legend of the Sword. I first spoke with them for television. Hunnam answered my opening question about the film Excalibur, a precursor to their movie, enthusiastically. But I could feel Ritchie disengage. He sat back and went into autopilot, answering my questions by rote. The rest of the interview flew by in a flurry of quips and tossed off answers.

Half-an-hour later I sat with them again to do a longer interview for print.

"I'm glad we can make amends," said Hunnam as I came in the room. "It seemed like you wanted to have a proper conversation and we were having a bit of a jolly up."

The whole experience was an example of the yin and yang of movie promotion. The yin was Ritchie, an intense man who refers to the walking a red carpet as "a dog and pony show" before adding that's not what he's here for.

The yang is Hunnam, an engaging actor who said, "We don't make these things to live on in obscurity, we make them with the hope that people will see them and this is one of the ways we can help manifest that."

The duo have been all over the world talking to media people with perfectly coiffed hair and big smiles, answering the same questions on repeat. By the time I get them there's nothing new to ask about their update of the Arthurian legend. But there is an unspoken contract between my interview subjects and me.

Whether it's for television or for the paper you hold in your hands, the deal is the same. They say something interesting and I report it. They get publicity and I get a story that my audience will hopefully enjoy.

As Ritchie sat with his arms folded across his chest, I thought about our "contract" and the difference between the two men.

Despite his tabloid appeal — for a time the British press made a sport of reporting on him — Ritchie strikes me as a private person. He's more interested in what he'll be working on next than the film he spent years making and has now signed off on. Or perhaps it's that, as a director, he's used to being in control and in these situations he has to cede power to the interviewer.

"We both know why we're doing it," Ritchie says, "but the red carpet last night, I'll tell you, I felt soulless after that. After ten minutes get me off there because it takes me hours to recover."

Hunnam, the performer, is immediately warm and open. When Ritchie talks about losing patience on press days Hunnam jokes, "Guy Ritchie leaves the room and Johnny Nasty shows up."

Luckily, Johnny Nasty never showed. By the end of our time together the ice broke, Ritchie's arms unfolded and he smiled. I'm not sure what happened other than he seemed to warm up to me when we talked generally about film and not specifically about King Arthur.

We traded stories, discussed King Arthur, an actor's connection to their director and not being imprisoned by fear. Maybe it was just me but for a moment it felt like we were talking over a beer in a bar and not fulfilling our respective contractual duties. It was, in his words, a little less of a dog and pony show.

"I feel more satisfied now,' said Hunnam as I left and another press person walked into the room to repeat the process. "I really felt bad after the [television] interview [with you]. I thought, 'Man, that's a serious cat and we really just f–ed around for four minutes.' I'm glad we got into some of the nitty-gritty."

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

Snatched ★★★★	HOW RATING WORKS
King Arthur: Legend of the Sword ★★★	★★★★ SEE IT
The Wall ★★★	★★★ WORTHWHILE
Bon cop, bad cop 2 ★★	★★ UP TO YOU
Tommy's Honour ★★★	★ SKIP IT

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Snatched holds humour hostage

Peter Howell
life@metronews.ca

Imagine the Hollywood pitch meeting where adventure comedy Snatched got the green light.

Filmmaker: "Amy Schumer and Goldie Hawn, together at last! Two generations, two funny ladies! Goldie is ending her 15-year screen retirement for this!"

Studio suit: "But the script has them being kidnapped for ransom money in South America by very bad hombres! This actually happens to people! It's not funny!"

Filmmaker: "We'll surround them with wacky actors like Wanda Sykes, Joan Cusack and Ike Barinholtz of The Mindy Project! It'll be great!"

Whether or not something like this actually occurred, Snatched is what we get. It follows the above template, except for the bit about being great, which it most certainly isn't.

The movie earns a few chuckles, but humour is largely held hostage by a lewd and lazy screenplay that wanders like Billy in The Family Circus.

Evidently the studio felt worried enough about Snatched that the decision was made to summarize the plot in a few lines of text right off the top, so people don't think anything really bad will occur in the next 90 minutes.

We're left guessing the thoughts of director Jonathan Levine (50/50, The Wackness) and screenwriter Katie Dippold (Spy, The Heat), because there's no discernible method to their madness.

Schumer is Emily, a naïve slacker who finds herself unattached, having been fired from her dead-end job and dumped by her jerk of a boyfriend.

Problem: Emily and the jerk were about to go on vacation together to South America. The tickets are non-refundable.

Solution: Travel with mom! Even though mom Linda (Hawn) is a homebody cat lady who considers foreign travel a ticket to trouble. She's almost as anti-social as Emily's pampered agoraphobic brother Jeffrey (Barinholtz).

After the usual bluster — "You don't do anything fun anymore!" — Emily and Linda find themselves sipping drinks and squabbling at a resort in Ecuador. They meet a zany pair of fellow travellers, played by Wanda Sykes and Joan Cusack, who are actually pretty funny together.

Emily and Linda also encounter the aforementioned bad hombres, led by the creepy Morgado (Oscar Jaenada), who considers them easy prey for a ransom scam.

Hijinks ensue, cautiously. Emily and Linda actually are in peril, from dangerous dudes and the encroaching jungle. Some blood is spilled.

Needless to say, Snatched isn't going to win any cultural sensitivity or tourism awards from South America.

But it also makes North Americans look bad, especially employees of the U.S. State Department, who couldn't care less about the plight of kidnapped Emily and Linda. Snatched isn't very funny, but at least it's broad-minded about its boorishness.

Amy Schumer plays Emily, a naïve slacker, and Goldie Hawn plays Linda, a homebody cat lady, in Snatched. CONTRIBUTED

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TOP 150 FOR 150
CELEBRATING CANADA'S GIFTS TO THE WORLD

Canada's flag: Leaf it to us

Sean Plummer

Though Canada turns 150 this year, our flag is a lot younger. The symbol of our nation — with its red 11-point maple leaf on a white background, flanked by fields of red — wasn't unveiled until 1965.

Before that, the search for the right flag to represent Canada had gone on for decades. Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King first established a committee to study the issue in 1925 but was shut down by, among others, people loyal to the Union Jack.

Another parliamentary flag committee formed by King in 1945 likewise went nowhere. It wasn't until 1963 that new prime minister Lester B. Pearson promised Canadians that they would have a flag within two years. Officials from across Canada combed through the various ideas, including thousands of designs submitted by the public.

Suggestions included such Canadian perennials as the beaver and the fleur-de-lis, as well as lions and stars. The iconic maple leaf was unanimously adopted in December 1964, with the first flag unfurled on Parliament Hill two months later.

Though Canada is turning 150, our flag wasn't unveiled until 1965. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Poutine all day long

Ah, sweet poutine. Believed to have originated in rural Quebec in the 1950s, the tasty combo of fries, cheese curds and gravy has grown from being a staple of greasy spoons, ski resorts and hockey arenas into a gourmet dish that can sustain numerous poutine-only restaurants. Regional variations abound, such as butter-chicken poutine in Vancouver and poutine with dressing in Newfoundland. However you like it, you're enjoying a gooey scoop of Canada.

SEAN PLUMMER

ISTOCK

Today's IMAX, short for image maximum, evolved from Expo 67 in Montreal. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

To the max

"Bigger is better" sounds American, but it's the ethos of one of Canada's most amazing inventions: IMAX.

Short for "image maximum," the famous film format, which projects an image eight-stories tall, evolved from a gimmick at Expo 67 in Montreal. Today it's a way for Hollywood to make movies majestic again — think the jaw-dropping moviescapes of The Dark Knight, Star Trek and The Avengers. And speaking of jaw-dropping, the Toronto-based company's latest venture is a virtual-reality arcade launched in L.A. this past January.

SEAN PLUMMER

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metro TRAVEL
Your essential daily news

Original concept map of Disneyland from 1953 could fetch $1M at auction

Pandora arrives in Florida

ATTRACTION

Remember the movie Avatar? Disney sure hopes you do

You may not have thought much about the 2009 movie Avatar over the past eight years, but Disney sure has.

The Magic Kingdom is wagering a reported half-billion dollars that you and zillions of other people will line up for new theme park attractions based on the movie's bioluminescent world of Pandora.

It's a major gamble, even by Disney standards. While the movie smashed box-office records thanks to its dazzling 3D effects and higher 3D ticket prices, it's also left little but a fading echo in pop-culture consciousness.

"I've never seen anybody ever walking down street wearing an Avatar t-shirt," says Martin Lewison, a theme park expert and business management professor at Farmingdale State College in New York. "There's no real emotional connection with Avatar among the public despite the movie being so popular."

Cultural plunder

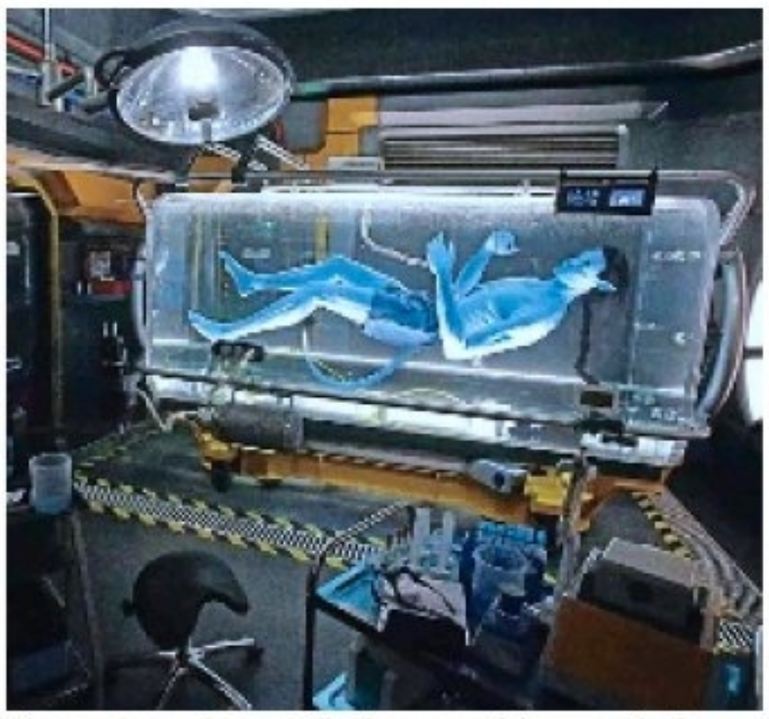
But theme parks are big business, and Disney is counting on what its executives call Avatar Land (the official name is Pandora: World of Avatar) to help keep that engine humming.

In the fiscal year that ended in October, parks and resorts accounted for 31 per cent of Disney's nearly $56 billion U.S. in revenue, though only 21 per cent of its nearly $16 billion U.S. in operating profit.

Disney also wants to prove it can turn its newer cultural properties, which include Star Wars and the Marvel superhero franchise, into popular theme-park attractions.

In that, it's basically playing catch-up with rival Universal Studios, which launched a hugely successful Harry Potter theme park in 2010.

Now the big question is whether Disney can pull that off with Avatar Land, or if it's just chasing unobtainium. (Yes, that's an Avatar reference. See?)



Director James Cameron has been promising sequels since the original premiered. Release dates for four have been pushed back again. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Odd property

James Cameron, the mercurial director famous for Titanic and several other blockbusters, has been promising Avatar sequels almost since the original premiered. One had been in development since 2010. Disney licensed the park rights in 2011, when a sequel didn't seem that far off.

Little did Disney know. In 2013, Cameron announced his intention to film three follow-on films simultaneously, for release starting in 2016. But the date was pushed back until 2017, then 2018. In March, Cameron said 2018 was "not happening." In April, he announced the start of production on four sequels now scheduled to roll out from 2020 to 2025.

That left Disney to plunge ahead on its own with Avatar Land, which opens May 27 at Disney's Animal Kingdom theme park in Florida. If all goes well, the park "will promote the films and the new films will of course circle back and promote the land," Lewison says.

Beating Harry Potter

One big reason the Walt Disney Co. has pushed ahead with Avatar Land — not to mention Star Wars-themed attractions scheduled to open in 2019 — is the rising threat posed by Universal's The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

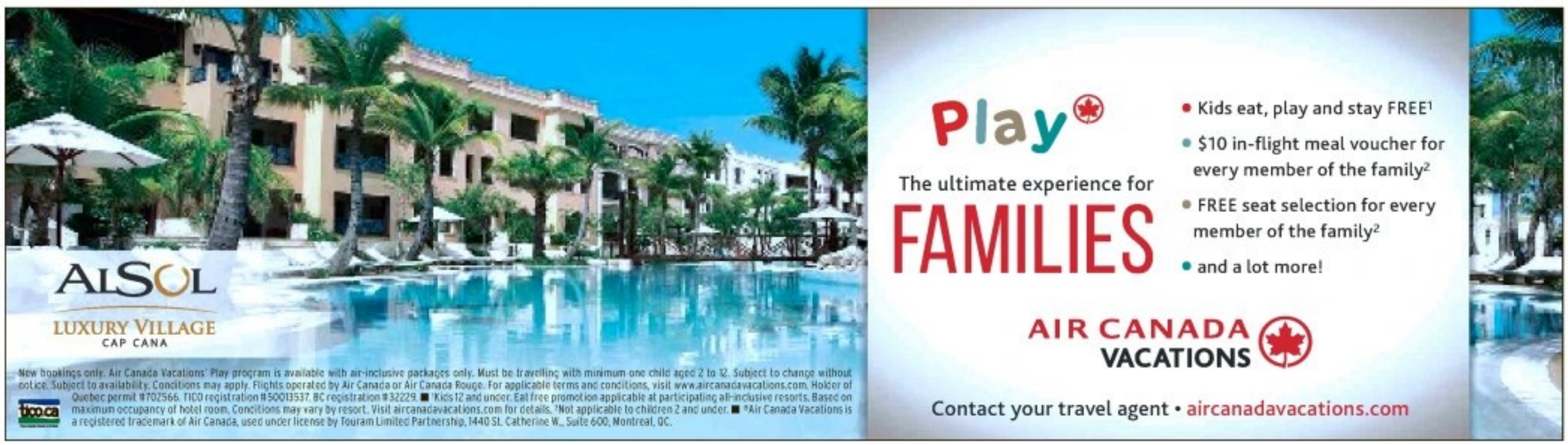
In 2015, about 138 million people visited Walt Disney Attractions, up nearly three per cent from the prior year. Universal Parks and Resorts saw less than a third as many visitors — 45 million — but that figure was up nearly 12 per cent, according to the trade group Theme Entertainment Association.

"What Harry Potter did was to become a big public success and financial one as well," says John Gerner, managing director of theme park consulting firm Leisure Business Advisors. "It really set a new bar for our industry."

Of course, Avatar is a very different brand than Harry Potter, which has launched nine feature films to date, including an entirely new series whose second installment is due next year — well before the first Avatar sequel.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Faced with a blockbuster that hardly left an impression, Disney is focussing on the landscape and wildlife of Pandora — rather than characters —to sell the rides. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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Ducks have a score to settle with Preds

2017 NHL PLAYOFFS
CONFERENCE FINALS

Anaheim looks to avenge pair of series losses to Nashville

Among the numerous hurdles and obstacles that have blocked the Anaheim Ducks' path to a Stanley Cup title this decade, Nashville goalie Pekka Rinne might be the biggest — and not just because he's six-foot-five.

After beating Anaheim in two previous playoff series, the fantastic Finn and his Predators are looming again in front of the Ducks in the Western Conference final. Game 1 is Friday night in Anaheim.

The Ducks and the Predators were the class of the first two rounds, taking just five combined losses and earning a rematch of last season's first-round series for considerably higher stakes.

Rinne and the wild-card Predators won that series in seven games, prompting coach Randy Carlyle's return to Anaheim and a renewed focus on playoff mental strength. The Ducks are in the conference finals for the second time in three years after winning five straight Pacific Division titles, but they still haven't made a Stanley Cup final since 2007.

Predators goaltender Pekka Rinne leads the post-season with a .951 save percentage and a 1.37 goals-against average. JEFF ROBERSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

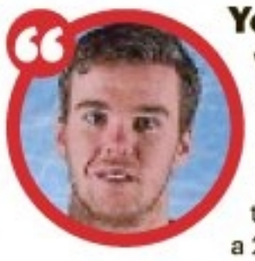
In the rematch, the Ducks hope to show the Predators what they learned last spring.

"Obviously it's a new year, new teams, (but) for some of us, it means a little bit more," Anaheim centre Ryan Kesler said. "But we're all playing for the same thing, and right now it's about getting four wins before they do. It's going to be a tough road, but we're up to it."

Rinne and the Predators also beat the Ducks in 2011 for the first playoff series victory in franchise history. Heading into the franchise's first conference finals appearance, Nashville is putting little reliance on its previous successes against the Ducks.

"Whoever wins the series gets to play for the Cup," Predators captain Mike Fisher said. "So that's probably the only motivation you need."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



You look at any team that has won and been good for all these years, they start with a disappointment and we've done that. Connor McDavid after the Oilers were eliminated in Game 7 with a 2-1 loss on Wednesday night in Anaheim

PGA TOUR

Successful debut at Players for Canuck

Mackenzie Hughes arrived at the TPC Sawgrass with no scar tissue and played his first round at The Players Championship with no bogeys.

Pretty simple, eh?

The Canadian rookie shook his head and laughed. Even after going bogey-free in his debut Thursday for a 5-under 67 to share the lead with William McGirt, Hughes saw enough of the Players Stadium Course to realize that surprises lurk around every corner.

"There's just not really a moment where you can let up," Hughes said.

No need explaining that to Adam Scott, who won The Players in 2004 and was off to a strong start on a steamy afternoon when he was 6 under and heading to the infamous par-3 17th with its island green.

First, he watched Masters champion Sergio Garcia hit a gap wedge that took one big hop, land just behind the cup and disappear for a hole-in-one. Scott followed by spinning a shot off the bank and into the water for a double bogey, and he compounded that with another double bogey.

Mackenzie Hughes GETTY IMAGES

"I played some good golf out there and unfortunately not on the last two," Scott said after settling for a 70. "It happens."

At least he had company.

Dustin Johnson's first wedge of the day hit the pin, caromed off the green and led to bogey. The world's No. 1 player opened with a 71. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Canada gets a scare from France, improves to 4-0

Marc-Edouard Vlasic scored the winner as Canada survived a scare in a tight 3-2 win over co-host France on Thursday at the world hockey championship.

Canada improved its record to 4-0 despite falling behind an opponent for the first time in the tournament when Damien Fleury put France up 2-1 on the power play at the 1:37 mark of the second period.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vargas lowers stellar ERA as Royals blank Rays

Major-league ERA leader Jason Vargas went seven more scoreless innings, Salvador Perez had a two-run double during a five-run eighth inning and the Kansas City Royals beat the Tampa Bay Rays 6-0 on Thursday.

Vargas (5-1) scattered three hits and dropped his ERA from 1.19 to 1.01.

Whit Merrifield homered for the Royals, who won three of four against the Rays. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GSP comeback fight cancelled

MMA

UFC president White runs out of patience with Montrealer

UFC president Dana White has pulled the plug on Georges St-Pierre's comeback fight against middleweight champion Michael Bisping. St-Pierre, who has not fought since November 2013, says he is ready to fight after October. White says that's too late.

"I made this GSP fight, we did a press conference. The thing was supposed to happen in July. Michael Bisping is going to have to defend his title now. We're not waiting for GSP," White told Fox Sports Australia.

The 35-year-old St-Pierre last fought at UFC 167 when he won a narrow decision over Johny (Bigg Rigg) Hendricks for his 12th straight victory.

George St-Pierre was supposed to fight Michael Bisping for the middleweight title. GETTY IMAGES

St-Pierre then took a hiatus, saying he needed time away from the sport.

When the Montreal MMA star's return was announced in February, the UFC said the Bisping-GSP fight would take place in the second half of the year. St-Pierre offered his own take on that in a social media video posting last Friday.

"Mr. Bisping, I cleared my entire schedule to get ready for training camp after the summer. So I can fight you any time after October. You pick the date. Let's get it on."

That did not go down well with the UFC boss, apparently upset that everything was on hold in the middleweight division because of GSP.

"Georges St-Pierre is saying he will not be ready to compete now until November. Who knows if that's even the case. It could be next year," White told Fox Sports Australia. "So we're not waiting for Georges St-Pierre any more. We're moving on with the division, and Yoel Romero will get the next shot."

Romero (12-1-0) is the No. 1 contender at 185 pounds.

St-Pierre was unaware of White's statement that the Bisping fight was off. "I didn't know that," he said in a text.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

I cried the way home

Eddie Alvarez reminiscing on his loss to Conor McGregor at UFC 205. Alvarez will start his climb back up the lightweight ladder against Dustin Poirer at UFC 211 this Saturday.

NOTORIOUS M&M

UFC President Dana White says he won't wait much longer for negotiations to start for a Conor McGregor vs. Floyd Mayweather boxing match, according to website MMA Junkie.

White said Thursday that if he can't get McGregor to agree to terms by Sunday, he plans to move on from the matchup with Mayweather altogether.

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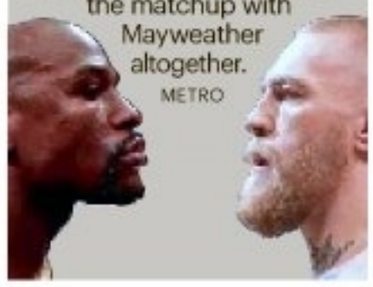

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MAKE IT TONIGHT

The *Ultimate* Coconut Chocolate Banana Bread

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

The search is over! This loaf is the ultimate banana bread combining loads of chocolate, flakey coconut and slivered almonds.

Ready in1 hour and 10 minutes
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 55 minutes
Makes: 1 loaf

Ingredients
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter (1 stick)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 3 bananas, mashed
- 4 tbsp almond milk
- 2 cups spelt flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 1/4 cup unsweetened flaked coconut

Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 350 and grease a 9x5 inch loaf pan.

2. Set aside. Cream butter and sugar with a hand blender or stand mixer. Add one egg. Mix in mashed bananas and almond milk.

3. In a separate bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add flour mixture in stages to butter mix incorporated after each addition. Fold in the chips, coconut and almond slivers. Pour into prepared baking pan; tapping pan down to make sure it's evenly distributed.

4. Bake in the oven for 50 to 55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool on a rack for a few minutes. Turn out of pan and store in a plastic bag for up to a week.

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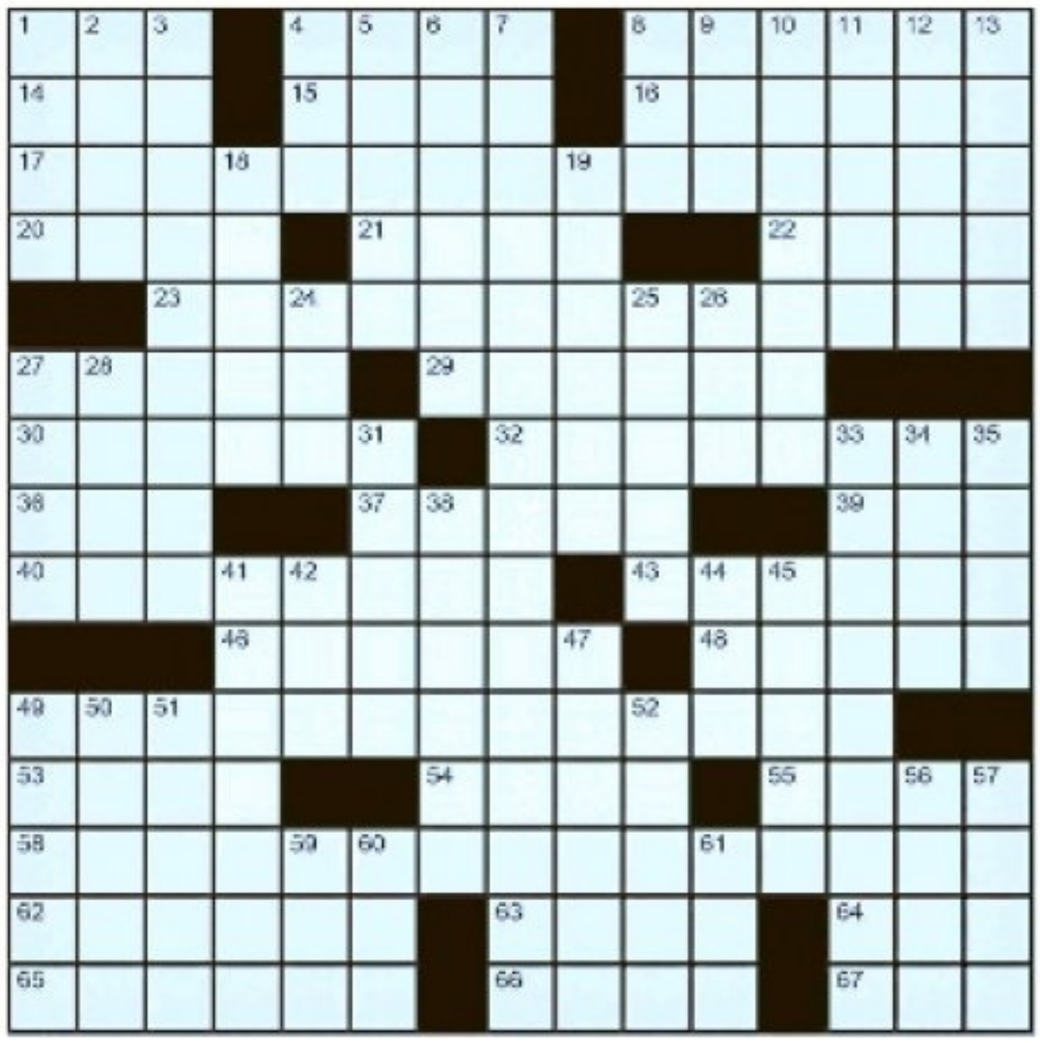
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. '_' _ for Digby
4. Reckons
8. Least wild
14. Grocery store, e.g.
15. Get set, for short
16. "There _ _ many people!" (It's so crowded!)
17. Bre-X, basically: 3 wds.
20. Latin hymn: "Dies _"
21. Ms. Russell of "Felicity"
22. "_ _ Miracle" by Culture Club
23. Narrating protagonist in Canadian writer Robertson Davies' 1970 novel Fifth Business: 2 wds.
27. Room-enough-to-fit requirement
29. Retro album's protection
30. Author: French
32. Theatrical production backdrop: 2 wds.
36. "Diamonds _ Forever" (1971)
37. Impede, in law
39. Mon's weekly follower
40. Ukraine: Odessa = 'The Pearl of the _ _'
43. Canadian sweets shoppe, Laura _
46. Detect that noise: 2 wds.
48. Old El Paso creations
49. One might offer ziplining, hiking, water slides, and loads of other fun activities: 2 wds.
53. Barbarian
54. Nero's 1151
55. Night _ (Staying-up-late people)
58. Couch potato's prized techie possession: 2 wds.
62. Ms. Shire's of "Rocky" (1976)
63. Rockefeller Center muralist
64. Olive of cartoons
65. Kiosks
66. Cupid's ancient Greek counterpart
67. OR on-callers

DOWN
1. Techie-sounding prefix
2. Pet bat on "The Munsters"
3. Orange Pekoe brand: 2 wds.
4. Music pace in 60 seconds [acronym]
5. Mr. Estrada's John Philip _ (b.1854 - d.1932)
6. Principles
7. Space-saving access in a multi-level condo: 2 wds.
8. Identify
9. Rover's response!
10. Prosper _ (19th-century French writer)
11. Les _-Unis (USA)
12. 'The March King', 13. NBC's morning show
18. Mr. Bigalow, Male Gigolo
19. Workday hours, _ _ five
24. Modern: German
25. Collects, as crops
26. Li'l norm
27. Swedish car
28. Knit one _ two...
31. Convened for a meeting once more
33. Kim of Canadian trio Shaye
34. 2002-debuting coin
35. Mr. Knight's
38. Skincare formulas
41. Gourmet's parsley
42. Mattel guy
44. 7th Greek letter
45. Ricochet shot in billiards
47. Penn & _ (Magic act)
49. Borders
50. Robert of "Goodbye, Mr. Chips" (1939)
51. "There you are!"
52. FOX News host, Judge Jeanine _
56. Space travel distance, for short: 2 wds.
57. Salts, in Sherbrooke
59. 'Arbor' suffix
60. Beatles drummer's initials-sharers
61. Abbr. aliens

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
You are so enthusiastic that you can sell anything to anyone today — your words are like gold! This is a great day for those of you who sell, market, teach, act, write or drive for a living.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
"There's money in them thar hills!" Oh yes, your enthusiasm will attract money to you today. You will do well in all financial negotiations. Ka-ching!

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You can take it to the bank today, because you are powerful. No matter what you do, you will come out smelling like a rose. Use this strong energy for creating good in the world around you.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You appreciate the behind-the-scenes support you get from others at this time. Something good and beneficial will come from this. Look for ways to make this happen.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Your ability to deal with others today, especially in groups, is stellar! Today you are a natural leader, which is why everyone will take their cue from you. Ah, maestro!

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Today your ambition is aroused. You will act with skillful means, which is why this is an excellent day to talk to bosses, parents, teachers, VIPs and the police. You look like a winner!

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is a fast-paced day full of detours and exciting changes! Even your mind is full of quickly changing thoughts and clever ideas.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Travel plans totally appeal to you today. This is the perfect day to discuss matters related to publishing, the media, medicine, the law and higher education.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You couldn't pick a better day to discuss inheritances and shared property because everyone probably will be fair; nevertheless, you are in a winning position. Oh, yes! Do something.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You will be extremely productive at work today. You have great energy and wonderful intuition about how to use it to get the most bang for your buck. You also feel healthy and vigorous!

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is the perfect day for a vacation. It's also a great day to schmooze with your friends and enjoy social outings, sports events and playful activities with children.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Whatever you do at home today will bring about positive results for you. Likewise, this is an excellent day to pursue real-estate deals.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

				6	5		2	
			4	3		1		9
							5	
	5							4
7	6			1			9	2
2							8	
	4							
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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

for more fun and games go to metronews.ca/games

5	8	6	4	2	3	9	7	1
4	2	3	9	7	1	8	5	6
7	1	9	5	6	8	4	3	2
6	4	5	3	1	2	7	9	8
3	9	2	8	5	7	6	1	4
1	7	8	6	9	4	5	2	3
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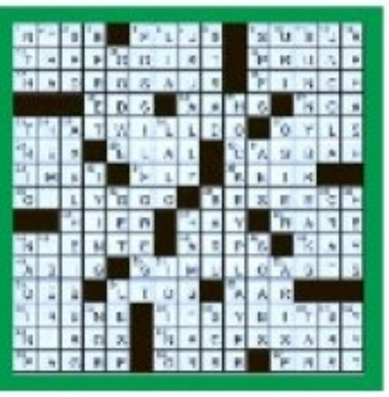

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